

Case 2960

***Hemidactylus garnotii* Duméril & Bibron, 1836 (Reptilia, Squamata):
proposed conservation of the specific name**

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Abstract. The purpose of this application is to conserve the widely used specific name of *Hemidactylus garnotii* Duméril & Bibron, 1836 for an all-female triploid species of gecko widespread from India to northern Australia and Polynesia, which has also been introduced into Florida and the Bahama Islands. The name is threatened by the long enigmatic but now assured senior subjective synonym *H. peruvianus* Wiegmann, 1835.

Keywords. Nomenclature; taxonomy; Reptilia; GEKKONIDAE; gecko; *Hemidactylus garnotii*.

1. Wiegmann (1835, p. 240) described the new gecko species *Hemidactylus peruvianus* on the basis of a single female specimen (catalogue no. ZMB 395 in the Museum für Naturkunde der Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin) ostensibly from near Tacna, Peru. Although listed as a valid name, even as recently as 1970, the species remained enigmatic because it was 'never found again, at the type-locality or elsewhere' (see Peters & Donoso-Barros, 1970, p. 142).

2. In 1969, however, Kluge & Eckardt (1969, pp. 658-659) reported their discovery that Wiegmann's holotype of *Hemidactylus peruvianus* represented a species generally known since 1836 (Duméril & Bibron, 1836, p. 368) as *Hemidactylus garnotii*. The synonymy was reiterated in two more recent monographs by Kluge (1991, 1993). Although widely distributed (India, southeast Asia, the Philippines, through Indonesia to northern Australia and Polynesia), there are no confirmed records of the species for the Western Hemisphere, except for recent introductions into Florida and

the Bahama Islands. The holotype of *H. peruvianus* presumably has erroneous locality data and was collected elsewhere on F.J.F. Meyen's trip around the world (see Kluge & Eckardt, 1969, p. 659).

3. Duméril & Bibron (1836, p. 369) recorded that *Hemidactylus garnotii* was based on two specimens collected by Garnot and Lesson from 'l'île de Taïti' (Tahiti). The syntypes are numbered MNHN 2318 and 2318A in the Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle, Paris (see Bauer & Henle, 1994, p. 123). Duméril & Bibron (pp. 369–370) also included *H. peruvianus* in their work, noting that they had reproduced [in French] Wiegmann's description of Meyen's specimen 'n'ayant pas encore eu l'occasion d'observer aucun échantillon appartenant à cette espèce'.

4. The specific name of *Hemidactylus garnotii* Duméril & Bibron, 1836 is a junior subjective synonym of *H. peruvianus* Wiegmann, 1835 but Kluge & Eckardt (1969, p. 659) properly concluded that 'it is in the best interest of nomenclatural stability to continue to use the most often cited *garnotii* rather than the little known name *peruvianus* which predates it'. Bauer & Günther (1991, p. 289) agreed in their listing of types in the Berlin Museum.

5. However, as long as the name *H. peruvianus* remains ostensibly valid it could be revived by any worker rigidly applying the Principle of Priority (Article 23a of the Code). Article 23b makes it clear that if application of that Principle in any given case disturbs stability, existing usage should be maintained and the case submitted to the Commission for a ruling.

6. The specific name of *Hemidactylus garnotii* has been consistently used for this species of gecko for over 150 years, whereas *H. peruvianus* was never properly applied until 1969, when Kluge & Eckardt discovered its identity, and the name has never been used as valid for the species to which it actually applies. The exhaustive synonymy for *H. garnotii* in Bauer & Henle (1994, pp. 123–125) cites 83 usages of the species-group name from 1843–1991, in different works by at least 70 authors. Not since 1934 has any other name been used for the species, during which time *H. peruvianus* was used twice without knowledge of the species to which it applies. The case for the conservation of the name *garnotii* clearly meets the *prima facie* criteria of Article 79c for the conservation of a long-used junior synonym threatened by an unused senior synonym.

7. The International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature is accordingly asked:

- (1) to use its plenary powers to suppress the specific name *peruvianus* Wiegmann, 1835, as published in the binomen *Hemidactylus peruvianus*, for the purposes of the Principle of Priority but not for those of the Principle of Homonymy;
- (2) to place on the Official List of Specific Names in Zoology the name *garnotii* Duméril & Bibron, 1836, as published in the binomen *Hemidactylus garnotii*;
- (3) to place on the Official Index of Rejected and Invalid Names in Zoology the name *peruvianus* Wiegmann, 1835, as published in the binomen *Hemidactylus peruvianus* and as suppressed in (1) above.

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